621 occupied separate sets of villages and were not
631 subject to each others' jurisdiction. In war,
565 however, they might interdine freely and spend
644 the night in each others' houses. In villages owned by Nambudiris or by Nambudiri-owned temples the retainer-Nayar were of group (1), in royal villages, of group (2), and in chiefly and village headmen's lineages, of group (3). In Calicut and Walluvanad however, group (3) was further subdivided into Agattu Charna Nayars or indoor retainers, [18] and Purattu Charnas or outdoor retainers. Purattu Charnas were retainers to chiefs and headmen, Agattu Charnas houseservants and clerks (with the title Menon - clerk) within the royal palaces. In Calicut, the Purattu Charnas were still further subdivided into ordinary Purattu Charnas who served chiefs and headmen, and special Purattu Charnas or Pariccha Menons who formed the personal bodyguard of the kind and senior princes.

613 In each village, there were traditionally four,
621 five or six matrilineages of the appropriate re-
427 tainer subcaste. The separate households or
566 property-groups within each lineage had the hereditary right, granted by the Raja, to occupy freely stretches of garden land, and to lease large plots of wet rice land on long-term tenure from the janmi. This tenure was called kanam; the tenant, a kanamdar or kanakkaran. At the start of a period of tenure, the legal guardian (oldest man or karanavan) of the Nayar retainer household paid a lump sum in cash to the janmi, called kanam. Thereafter he paid an annual rent

613 621 427 566 in kind, from which was deducted a small proportion of the original cash sum. When the original sum had been exhausted the kanakkaran recommenced paying full rent, or renewed the sum, or else surrendered the land. It seems likely that these sums [19] of money were traditionally paid only on the succession to headship of a new janmi or a new kanakkaran on the death of the old, or at irregular intervals convenient to both parties. Both kanam and jenmam rights could be sold, but a kanakkaran could not be evicted without the consent of the local Nayar assembly. The system allowed of a certain degree of spatial mobility and of the periodic segmentation of the Nayar property-group, some branches of which might even move to another village if lands became short. On the whole, however, kanam tenures were of long duration, and a Nayar property-group might remain stable for several generations.

566 In addition to their role as tenants, members of the retainer subcastes had other economic and also ritual relations with their landlord. [994] They were called adiyar (servants) of their janmi and must attend and participate at his household ceremonies. Women of the retainer lin- [357] eages worked as house-servants of the janmi's family, while older Nayar men who had retired [427] from the army might be employed as bailiffs who collected the janmi's rents and organized the labour of his serfs.

564 794 In addition to the Nayars, members of certain other aristocratic castes were usually present in each village. These included the temple

631 cases were carried voluntarily by low caste
692 disputants of different castes to the Nayar ass-
681 embly, but this might also step in by forces in disputes which threatened the peace of the village. Punishments included beatings and fines
[54] to the temple. However, Nayars and Nambudiris had also the power of life and death over their serfs and might have these killed without recourse to a higher authority. Any Nayar had, for example, the right to spear at sight a Pulaya who accidentally touched him, refused to recede from his approach, or insulted a Nayar woman.

681 In the castes above the serfs, grave crimes
692 were carried to the court of the king. Murder, sacrilege, the wounding of a cow or of a Brahman, and theft from a man of "good" caste, were punishable by death. Brahmans and women, however, were never officially put to death. Brahmans were excommunicated by their own assemblies, women were sold into slavery with the Arabs. If, however, a Nayar woman fornicated with a man of lower caste (an offence legally punishable by excommunication and slavery) it is recorded that in fact her own brothers, with the tacit consent of [35] the ruler, would themselves spear her to death. The death sentence for men of the polluting castes was impalement, for Nayars, spearing, and for Muslims, hanging. Unsolved civil disputes between high caste men and Muslims were tried in the royal court by ordeal, usually of boiling oil.

564 It is interesting to notice that the higher the
571 caste, the wider the field of social relations.
631 For the serfs and lower polluting castes, this

613 their children in other lineages. The separa-
592 tion of the ritual marriage (the tali-rite) from
595 actual cohabitation (sambandham, initiated without religious rites) underlined the necessity to the lineage of marriage and procreation, and the exclusion of the individual husband and father from a legally and socially significant role in relation to it.

594 It is clear therefore that whatever name we
592 give to the traditional marital relationship
566 among Nayars, the elementary family, contrary to the view of Murdock (11), did not exist as an economic, legal or ceremonial unit among them. This circumstance, which is perhaps unique in the world, was evidently made possible by their specialized role as one caste group in a larger society in which, in general, marriage and the elementary family were institutionalized. First, the Nayar system could probably not have come about in any but a leisure class supported by the labour of tenants and serfs. Because of this, young Nayar men need give economic [78] support neither to their wives nor to their sisters. Women were the people who sat at home on the land; their maintenance was assured by the payment of rents from low caste tenants and the labour of serfs, and it was necessary to have only one old man living with them to manage
701 their financial affairs. The feudal relationships
58 of the caste system thus freed all able-bodied men for their occupation as a mobile militia. In explaining their peculiar marriage relationships, I am inclined to emphasize the military organization even more than the status of Nayars

595 and girls of suitable age. But only older men
701 were permitted to marry and form a household with their wives and children.

The similarity between systems like the Masai and the Nayar system is that in those groups of the population organized for warfare, male sexuality was divorced from the upbringing of children, which among Nayars took place within the lineage and concerned only lineage members. Among the Masai this freeing of a man's sexual life from the responsibilities of child-rearing concerned only certain age-groups of men, while in Calicut and Cochin it applied to the total male population of one caste.

595 The extent to which Nayar kinship was in-
701 fluenced by their relation to the land and by the
• 56 military organization becomes clearer when we
184 compare the kinship system in Calicut and Cochin with that of Nayars in the northern kingdoms of Kolattunad, Kottayam and Kadattunad, north of the Kora River which formed the northern boundary of the Calicut kingdom at the height of the Zamorin's power.

Apart from the narrow coastal belt, the country in north Malabar was rocky and mountainous, and comprised much waste land and virgin forest. Perhaps because of this, the sparsely populated northern kingdom never achieved the degree of political centralization found in the central kingdom. Government was ostensibly by nadavaris owing a tenuous allegiance to their Rajas. In fact, however, in all these kingdoms chiefs perpetually rebelled against their Raja and shook off his power for long periods, while

595 within the chiefdom political control over and
701 within villages was insufficient and feuds were
● 526 common between adjacent villages and between
184 individual lineages. The Nayars were not organized as a permanent militia of retainers, but merely fought occasionally on [80] behalf of a local chief. Apart from small subcastes of servants round the palaces, they formed an independent caste of cultivators owning their own land and lacking the overlordship of Nambudiri Brahmans and the service of agricultural serfs. Consistent with the absence of a permanent military organization, we find that in the North, Nayar men themselves managed the cultivation of their estates and sometimes actually worked the land, and that here residence was traditionally avunculocal, and polyandry unknown.

835 (3) Traditional Incest Prohibitions and Prefer-
582 ential Marriages

The traditional incest prohibitions were simple. In all castes of Malabar, prohibitions on sex-relations between kin coincide with prohibitions on marriage; this in any case would obviously be so among Nayars who did not distinguish the two and had no concept of adultery. Sex relations were strictly prohibited within the lineage; infringement of this rule was traditionally punishable by death, and during British rule with excommunication. Relations were also prohibited between a woman and two men of the same property-group, as between a man and two women of the same property-group. Sororal polygyny and fraternal polyandry, as well

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wil Kerala A Wil
Central Kerala Nayar

lages. The men were often clerks in the palaces. In Cochin, castes two and three were amalgamated and were called Swarupattil Sudra Nayars or "palace servants." 564

Fourth, a caste called Pallichan Nayars, both in Calicut and Cochin. Its members also were vassals in the villages of royalty, chiefs, and of the greater Brahmans. The men were often palanquin bearers as well as soldiers.

Fifth, a caste called Sudra Nayars in Calicut and Illath ("Brahman house") Sudras in Cochin. The members lived in villages owned by Brahman families or on the estates of Brahmanical temples.

The mutual ritual ranking of these five castes seems to have varied in different districts. In some districts they ranked in the order given, and men of a higher caste might marry women of a lower caste; the reverse was in theory forbidden. In other districts the castes seem to have disputed for precedence and not to have regularly intermarried. In most areas the five castes occupied different villages or different sections of large villages, seem to have had little communication in peacetime, and did not normally interdine. In war, however, soldiers of these different castes interdined freely and spent the night in each others' homes. It is possible that sexual restrictions between these castes were also relaxed in war, but this point is uncertain. 564 554 [628] [726]

In each village there were normally some four to seven matrilineages of the appropriate retainer caste. The separate households or property groups within each lineage had the hereditary right, granted by the king, to occupy stretches of garden land and to lease large plots of wet paddy land on long-term tenure from the village landlord. The tenure was called *kānam;* the tenant, *a kānakkaran.* In most villages the men of retainer lineages also owed military service to their landlord, ultimately on behalf of the king. (The military organization is discussed below.) Retainers were called *adiyar,* a word equivalent to "vassals," of their landlord. They participated in his household ceremonies and often waited upon him. Women of retainer lineages could be summoned as serving maids in the landlord's family; men, as bailiffs to collect the landlord's rents and organize the labor of his serfs. 621 613 564 566 471 427

The Temple-Servant Castes In addition to the Nayars, other aristocratic castes often lived in a village. These were the temple servants, nowadays collectively called Ambalavasis. They are relevant to our discussion because they sometimes married Nayar women. The highest of these castes were the Chakkyars (or reciters of Puranic stories) and the Pushpagans (or flower gatherers for temples), which had patrilineal descent systems of the same type as the Nambudiris. They 564 794

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

The Christians of Kerala numbered about 20 per cent of the population in 1931. The Syrian Christians, the most ancient and numerous group, may be descended from Persian Nestorians; they were trading on the coast at least by 525 A.D. (McCrindle, 1897: 119). Christians were and are concentrated in Travancore and Cochin. They received land grants near the ports and enjoyed virtual self-government provided they paid taxes to the kings (Logan, 1951, I: 260–270; III: cxxi–cxxvi). As landlords, tenants, and administrators—as well as traders—they ranked socially parallel to the Nayars and were served in the same manner by Hindu polluting castes and serfs. Their trade declined after the Arabs became dominant on the coast, and some of them began to serve in the royal armies along with Nayars. The Portuguese converted some Syrians to Roman Catholicism, but the converts still retained the Syriac rite. All Syrians were readily distinguishable from the lower-ranking Latin Catholics, converts to Catholicism from Portuguese times who were drawn from various polluting castes.

The Economic System

The principles of reciprocity and redistribution,[4] rather than of market trade, dominated the village economy until toward the mid-nineteenth century. In villages, castes were characterized by hereditary occupations and correspondingly by hereditary, differential rights in the produce of village lands (Logan, 1951, I: 110–112, 269, 270, 599–600, 623). The village landlord and the Nayar tenants were the main redistributive agents, collecting in goods from the lower orders and redistributing them in customary shares. In all village economic transactions, *households*, and not whole caste groups or individuals, were the units of interaction.

The village landlord's household "owned" almost all the land in the village. "Ownership" meant both more and less than modern Western landownership (Logan, 1951, I: 602–603). The landlord might not sell his land without the consent of the king or of a chief, and sale was restricted to families of appropriate caste. He might not evict his tenants, village servants, or serfs without their consent unless they committed grave crime (*ibid.*, I: 607). On the other hand, the landlord's ownership included judicial rights over the village population.

The landlord retained a portion of the land as his private domain for cultivation by his serfs. The rest was held by Nayar retainer households as non-cultivating tenants (*kānakkar*). The tenant's household

[4] For an analysis of the general operation of these principles in the Indian village economy, see Neale, 1957: 218–236.

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
Central Kerala Nayar

originally rendered a portion of the produce to the landlord and additionally paid tribute in kind at New Year and at the succession of a new landlord or a new tenant on the death of the old (*ibid.*, I: 605–614). In return for their hereditary land rights tenants owed military and personal services to the landlord or to his military representative.

Each Nayar tenant household, like the landlord, retained a portion of land for cultivation by its serfs. Serfs were attached to the plots on which they lived, took the house name of their masters and were held as ancestral property. The master supplied the serf with daily rice, building materials, a house site, and special gifts at life crises and festivals.

Each tenant household also gave some lands to cultivating subtenant households (*verumpāttamdar*) of the Tiyyar caste. According to Logan, the latter traditionally retained one-third of the net produce and surrendered the rest to their masters (*ibid.*, I: 583).

The Nayar servant castes and most of the polluting castes of village servants (astrologers, artisans, bow makers, basket makers, etc.) owed their main services to the landlord, the Nayar tenants, or both. Each family held the hereditary service right of a village or occasionally of a small group of adjacent villages. Village servants gave their services to the appropriate higher-caste households when required. In return they received from each patron household customary biennial shares of rice and other goods after the two harvests of the year. Each servant family held a house site and garden from the landlord by hereditary right and was provided by its various patrons with the materials (metal, wood, etc.) of its craft.

Among the higher polluting castes, most of the village servants (astrologers, artisans, washermen, barbers, etc.) simply exchanged services reciprocally without making gifts of grain. Within this range of castes, however, Tiyyars, as cultivators, were subsidiary agents of redistribution, for they received the services of almost all the village servant castes and made biennial gifts to them of grain.

The village was thus almost self-sufficient for food and the daily necessities of life. In addition, part of its produce in rice and coconuts went out in the form of annual tribute given by the landlord to his district chief. The chief in turn gave tribute to the king and in addition rendered succession fees and gifts at life-crisis rites (Logan, 1951, II: ccxviii–ccxix; Ayyar, 1938: 270).

A large part of the king's revenue, however, came from taxes on overseas trade. Before 1500 the trade was in the hands of Arab merchants, who obtained pepper and other spices from inland land-

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

lords and tenants through indigenous Muslim middlemen. At that time the middlemen appear to have paid the villagers directly in cloth, metals, and luxury goods. Sumptuary laws confined the use of many imported goods to Brahmans, Nayars, and merchants. Other strategic goods such as metals and cloth filtered down from the landlords and tenants to the lower castes in the form of customary gifts at festivals.

During the period of European trade (1500 to 1792) markets and cash transactions encroached further upon the subsistence economy of villages. The kings prosecuted larger and larger wars and increasingly paid their Nayar soldiers in cash, even though they continued to muster them through the Nayars' "feudal lords."[8] As the pepper and coconut trade increased, new gardens came under cultivation and landlords and tenants often sold their spices for cash. The Nayar retainers seem to have received most of this cash from the towns, for as tenants they held the bulk of the village's garden lands as well as receiving their payments in war. From about 1550, therefore, landlords, who wished to maintain control of the economy, had to develop some means of extracting money from their tenants. Cash payments thus became a regular feature of the *kānam* tenure (Logan, 1951, I: cxxxi). The tenant periodically advanced a cash sum to the landlord as a kind of forced loan, the interest on which was then set off against the annual payment in kind. At the death of either landlord or tenant 13 per cent of the original sum was deducted from the loan as a succession fee. The tenant might then repay this amount in cash or revert to paying a larger share in kind. Later in the period cash renewal fees seem to have been exacted by landlords every twelve years. In some cases the tenant would prefer to surrender his land or to sell his right and move his family to another village. Sales of landlord rights, even (near the ports) to Europeans or Muslims, also increased. However, sale of either landlord or tenant rights remained disreputable, lengthy, and hedged about with legal restrictions until after the collapse of native rule (K. P. P. Menon, 1929: 309–310; Logan, 1951, I: 597 *et seq.*; II: cxxxv).

[8] I use the term "feudal" here without precise definition. In many respects the political structure of the Central kingdoms was comparable with that of the stronger Western European principalities such as Flanders and Normandy in the second half of the eleventh century. There was centralized control of the judiciary, of armies, trade, and coinage, but within each principality subordinate lords retained minor judicial powers and owned domains and private armies (Stephenson, 1942: 80–92).

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

or *kara-yōgam* (Logan, 1951, I: 87–88, 132–133). The functions of intra-caste administration of the Nayar assembly are discussed later in connection with the lineage.

The village headman, assisted by representatives from the Nayar retainers, judged small civil cases concerning debt, petty theft, or trespass. He appropriated the fines in these cases (Munro, quoted in Ayyar, 1938: 288). Individual Nayars also arbitrated in small civil disputes carried voluntarily to them by disputants within their own or the lower castes. Serfs came directly under the jurisdiction of their Nayar or Brahman masters, who had the power of life and death over them.

In the castes above the serfs, larger civil disputes and grave crimes were judged in the court of either chief or king. Chiefs' (*nāduvaris'*) judicial powers varied with the size of their armies, but feudatory princes (*svarūpis*) retained complete judicial rights with power over life and death (Ayyar, 1938: 272). So also did the Brahman managers of temple estates, although they called upon some local chief to carry out their judgments. Murder, sacrilege, treason, the wounding of a cow or of a Brahman, indecent assault of a woman, and grave theft from a man of "good" caste were generally punishable by death (*ibid.*: 282). Brahmans and women, however, were never officially executed by order of the king. All offenses among Brahmans were tried by an assembly of the Brahman neighborhood, which, with the local ruler's approval, might excommunicate the offender. If a woman of any caste above serfs was convicted of a capital offense the king had the right to sell her into slavery.

The higher the cast, the wider the field of social relations. Among the serfs and the higher polluting castes this was confined to a group of adjacent villages. Among temple servants, village headmen, and retainer Nayars (apart from their excursions in war) the field of social relations was the chiefdom. Among chiefs and royalty it was the kingdom, and among Brahmans, Kerala.

Hypergamy in the Upper Castes

Each of the castes below Nayar temple menials was endogamous, as is usual in the caste system throughout India. But among the higher "clean" castes the integration of political offices and of the larger territorial units was strengthened by hypergamous marriages. By hypergamy I mean the marriage of a woman of lower caste to a man of higher caste.

In discussing hypergamy it is necessary to explain the descent

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

in her care particular daily tasks in connection with cooking, housework, the pounding of paddy, and the tending of small children. The minimal unit of one woman and her own children, although having a special solidarity emotionally, was given very little recognition in the division of work. Women cooked communally in the kitchen, bathed and washed their own and any children's clothes in company in the bathing pool, and at the harvests moved in household groups to the fields to help the serf women of their families in cutting paddy. Nayar women's agricultural work, however, was subsidiary and they took no part in the more arduous tasks of transplanting and weeding.

The women of a Nayar retainer lineage also owed services to women of the landlord household to which their lineage was attached. Although their lower-caste rank prevented them from touching their mistress or entering her kitchen, they swept the house, accompanied its womenfolk to their bathing pool, and did various household chores. The landlord household normally chose three or four favorites from among the lineages attached to them to perform these services, but women of any retainer household might be summoned during the special preparations for a feast.

Authority and Responsibility Property groups, rather than lineages, were the main legal units within the local caste group. Their kāranavans formed the neighborhood assembly. Within the assembly, a kāranavan acted on behalf of his property group in managing the Nayar temple, settling small civil disputes in his own and lower castes, and adjudicating in cases of offense against Nayar religious law.

A kāranavan also represented his property group in its relations with its feudal lord and with higher authorities of the kingdom. We have seen that the property group and not the lineage held land on tenure from its landlord, and that although a lineage was attached to a landlord by hereditary right, the landlord conducted all economic transactions separately with the head of each property group within it. Similarly, each kāranavan was required to represent his own property group in ceremonial attendance on his village landlord, the chief of his district, or (if he were a direct vassal of the royal lineage) his king, at religious festivals associated with the temples of these dignitaries.

On behalf of his property group, a kāranavan was held legally responsible for his juniors in most types of legal offense. He paid their fines from taravād funds if they were found guilty of petty theft or debt before the village headman or the chief. If a member of the taravād was convicted in the royal court of treason, his kāranavan and

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

595 Leaving aside the problem of origins, however, what I would argue
182 is that the *specific* form of group marriage evolved among Central
701 Kerala Nayars in the period of the native kingdoms was particularly
adapted to their military organization, which in turn was made pos-
● [566] sible by the existence of the lower castes of sub-tenants and serfs. The
work of the tenants and serfs absolved Nayar men from the duty
of maintaining the women and children of either their natal or their
conjugal units by their own productive activities. It set free most of
these men for a lifetime of military service; in each matrilineal group
only one old man was needed at home to organize the work of the
household's retainers. Given matrilineal descent and inheritance, and
given the mobility of men and the absence of male economic obliga-
tions to kinswomen, there was no reason why either men or women
should restrict themselves to particular spouses. There was also, as
the early European writers realized, a positive value for the kingdom
in their not doing so, for plural marriages discouraged soldiers from
forming deep attachments to particular wives and children, and en-
couraged them to focus their loyalty on military leaders and on the
matrilineal groups through which they were recruited. At the same
time, plural marriages provided the soldiers with ready comforts and
a night's lodging both in their own villages and in other villages of
the kingdom through which they might pass. Whether or not chiefs
regularly enforced indiscriminate mating among Nayar women of their
districts in order to strengthen their soldiers' allegiances, a system of
group marriage involving optional multiple alliances certainly fitted
the way of life of a landed militia, already (for historical reasons)
[178 organized into matrilineal descent groups. A close connection between
group marriage and the military organization is further suggested in
that, after the British had disbanded the armies in about 1800, al-
though matrilineal descent persisted for over a century, group mar-
riage rapidly died out. Within about thirty years monogamous mar-
riage in Central Kerala, and monogamous or restricted, fraternally
polyandrous marriage in Travancore, had become common, and fa-
thers had assumed a definite role in the upbringing of their children.

Kinship in the Aristocratic Matrilineal Castes

THE LINEAGE

613 Among the retainer Nayars a household whose membership rose above
592 about thirty tended to divide its property between its segments when
423 the senior males who had spanned the segments were dead. Corre-
spondingly, lineages and clans of retainer Nayars went through a grad-

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North Kerala Nayar

food and other goods. The population expanded and much formerly waste land was brought under cultivation as gardens for the production of coconuts, pepper, cashew nuts, and cinnamon. Higher in the mountains Europeans developed estates of tea, coffee, and spices, which attracted wage labor from villages to the west. The development of the steamship, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and the entry of railways into Kerala in the 1860's were significant events in this process.

Political and Economic Systems

Traditionally, a hierarchy of the major Hindu castes was present as in Central Kerala, except that large areas of North Kerala had no Pulayas or agricultural serfs (*ibid.*, I: 148). Nambudiri Brahmans were fewer than in Central Kerala, but they controlled a small number of temple estates and claimed religious superiority over the Nayar rulers. Muslims were the dominant trading population of the ports and inland trading centers.

The mountainous terrain, heavy rainfall, poor communications, sparse population, and comparatively low productivity made political centralization more difficult than in Central Kerala. The ancient Kolattiri kingdom was divided into chiefdoms and villages in a manner similar to the later kingdom of the Zamorin, but judicial control was perhaps never as well centralized as in the Calicut kingdom. From the fourteenth century, when the Zamorins captured most of the Arab trade, the Kolattiri kingship lost some of its former power. The kingdom disintegrated into three smaller, virtually independent kingdoms—Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad—plus a number of small border chiefdoms of uncertain allegiance (*ibid.*, I: 343–344). Each of the three North Kerala kingdoms probably had a population of between 150,000 and 250,000, in contrast to the Calicut kingdom, which seems to have numbered some 600,000 to 720,000 (see note 5, page 473).

After 1500 each of the North Kerala rulers sought the help of one or another of the mutually hostile European and Middle Eastern trading powers, thus maintaining a state of fragmentation until the Mysorean conquest. In the struggles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some new Nayar chiefs also arose with mushroom rapidity on the basis of European support and gained partially autonomous sway over small groups of villages. Political and social mobility among Nayar aristocrats was thus more marked in North Kerala than in the more stable central kingdoms. Indeed, a North Kerala proverb re-

4:Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

to alien ghosts are built in the garden of the *taravād* house. They are propitiated annually or in emergency, usually with a cock sacrifice and an offering of toddy. Such alien ghosts are of a lineage other than that of the hosts and are usually of different caste. If a member of the *taravād* dies violently, his successors take care of his ghost in the course of their ancestral propitiations and do not commonly build a special shrine for it in their garden. They may fear such a ghost more than they fear the ghosts of forebears who died naturally, but they will not speak of this to outsiders. Rather, they are likely to deny to others that violent deaths have taken place in their lineage in the past, particularly if the deceased was a suicide or was executed in punishment for a crime. Such a ghost may however be regarded as a source of misfortunes by a Nāyar household of another lineage or by a household of one of the lower castes, expecially if the deceased died on its land or was in some way connected with it. It is then enshrined as an alien ghost in the garden of this house.

Most commonly, an alien ghost housed in a Nāyar garden is that of a former serf of the property group, of one of the "exterior" agricultural laboring castes of Pulayans, Parayans or Pānans. The legends of such ghosts are nowadays often forgotten, but several Nāyars told me that they are likely to be the ghosts of serfs who died after a quarrel with their masters or who were actually killed by them. The ghost is hostile to the *taravād* as a group and demands regular sacrifices if misfortune is to be averted. It is more hostile and capricious than are lineage ghosts, although it can also afford a certain vague protection to the *taravād* if it is correctly propitiated. Propitiations are made annually by a person of the ghost's own caste, often a Parayan or Pulayan of a family now serving the Nāyar property group. The propitiant's fee and the materials for the offering are provided by the *taravād*.

An alien ghost tends to be angered by persons who walk near its shrine at times other than those of propitiations. Some ghosts are angered only if people approach them round midnight or midday. At night, however, ghosts are able to wander some distance away from their shrines, so that it is possible to approach and offend them without being conscious of trespassing. In case of sickness or misfortune, the astrologer may diagnose that someone of the *taravād* has unwittingly offended the ghost and may order an emergency offering. After he has made the sacrifice, the low caste propitiant is likely to become possessed by the ghost and, while in a state of frenzy, to declare its satisfaction or to order further offerings. He may also take the opportunity to voice any grievances harbored by the *taravād's* low caste servants against its *kāranavan*.

A ghost of this kind may occasionally harm someone from outside its hosts' *taravād* who walks on their land at night. It could also harm its low caste propitiant if he failed in the correct performance of the rites. Usually, however, its attacks are confined to its hosts.

The ghost of such a hostile servant is to be distinguished from that of a servant who died heroically and voluntarily in the service of his Nāyar masters. Many Nāyar *taravāds* have legends of faithful serfs who died defending their masters' house during war, saved the lives of women and children, rescued their patrons from accidental death, or committed suicide in grief when a Nāyar patron had been killed. After death the ghosts of these servants are housed along with the *taravād's* lineage ghosts and are honored in ancestral propitiations. Nāyars point out that their heroism even makes the difference of caste irrelevant, for food is offered to them before it is offered

4: Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AWII Kerala AWII
Nayar

to lineage ghosts who were junior to them in age. The living of the *taravād* themselves make offerings to them and do them obeisance, whereas the ghosts of hostile serfs are especially polluting and malevolent and can be propitiated only by persons of their own caste.

Even so, the ghost of such a lower caste person who is honored for heroism by the *taravād* of his masters may, if he died violently, be feared as an alien ghost by other *taravāds*. In Kottayam in the eighteenth century, for example, there lived a certain Nāyar village headman who had as his servant a man of the Tiyyar caste of cultivators. During the invasions of Malabar by the Mysorean Muslim general, Tippu Sultan, in the 1780's, the Nāyar's *taravād* was threatened with conquest and forcible conversion to Islam. Having sent the women and children of his house into hiding, the *kāranavan* prayed before his lineage's patron goddess until the Muslims were at his gates. He then persuaded his Tiyyar servant to kill him, being unwilling to face the disgrace of circumcision at the hands of the Muslims. Having slain his master, the servant hid himself in an outhouse of the *taravād*. In the night he went forth and attacked the Muslims single-handed, killing several of them to avenge his master, before he was himself put to death. The ghost of this servant is now propitiated along with the lineage ghosts of his master's *taravād*. It is also, however, propitiated as an alien ghost by several other *taravāds* in the neighborhood.

Occasionally, malevolent alien ghosts are those of Nāyars who died violently, often in expiation of some crime. They may have committed suicide after being outcaste for contravention of religious laws, or in the case of a woman, may have been killed by their matrilineal kinsmen after cohabiting with low caste men. A woman called Kadangōtt Makkam, also of Kottayam, became a ghost in this way. According to legend, she was suspected by her sister-in-law of having sexual relations with an Oilmonger. Her brothers banished her from the *taravād*. She was agonized at the thought of leaving her children, and drowned them in the *taravād's* well. Her *kāranavan* and brothers were then obliged to stab her to death—the customary penalty for fornication outside the caste, and perhaps, also, for murder within the *taravād*. She became an alien ghost particularly liable to prevent women from bearing children, and is established in the gardens of several local *taravāds*.

Such alien ghosts, although Nāyar, are also propitiated by an officiant of the lower caste. The propitiant is usually from some caste which specializes in exorcism and counter-magic, such as Mannāns (washermen), Kanisans (astrologers, who in any case diagnose the misfortune and advise the propitiation) or Pānans (umbrella-makers, exorcists and agricultural workers). The mode of propitiation is the same as in the case of a low caste ghost.

Finally, an alien ghost is occasionally that of a Brahman who died violently. Brahman ghosts, or Brahmarākṣas, unlike all other ghosts, must be propitiated with vegetarian offerings by a Brahman priest hired for the purpose. But Brahman priests, unlike low caste officiants, never enter a state of voluntary possession by ghosts. Religious possession is particularly a low caste institution. It is not practiced by Brahmans, and when found among Nāyars, it is practiced by young men, women, and other persons who lack secular power. Brahmans do not need to become possessed by their ghosts and deities, for they have the power to demand whatever offerings and fees they require. Low caste propitiants need the authority of a supernatural agent in order to make demands on their high caste masters.

4:Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

[113] G. Roheim, *Psychoanalysis and Anthropology* (New York, 1950), pp. 134, 135, 432; F. L. K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow* (New York, 1948), pp. 240-243; Mead, 1949, pp. 40-41; J. W. M. Whiting and I. L. Child, *Child Training and Personality* (New Haven, 1953), pp. 263-304.

[12] Nāyar *Kāranavans* are of course not ancestors in the strict sense. However, I use this term for convenience as they fulfill roles similar to those of ancestors in many patrilineal societies.

[13] For an account of Irava social organization and culture, see A. Aiyappan, *Iravas* and *Culture Change*, Bull. Madras Govt. Mus., 5 (1945).

[14] M. N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 158-165.

[15] For a brief account of Tamil Brahman kinship, see E. K. Gough, "Brahman Kinship in a Tamil Village," *American Anthropologist*, XVIII, (1956), 826-853.

[16] See, e.g., Thurston, V (1909), 152-240.

[17] Fortes, 1949, p. 235.

[18] H. E. J. Stanley, trans., Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* (Hakluyt, 1886), p. 15.

[19] R. Rowlandson, trans., Sheikh Zein-ud-deen, *Tohfut ul Mujahideen*. An Offering to Warriors Who Shall Fight in Defence of Religion Against Infidels (Hakluyt, 1883), p. 63.

[20] A. C. Burnell, trans., *The Voyage of John Hughyen Van Linschoten to the East Indies* (From the Old English Translation of 1598) (Hakluyt, 1885), p. 284.

[764] [21] All castes on the southwest coast bury or cremate the dead in the southwest corner of the ancestral garden. This custom contrasts with that of Hindus in the eastern districts, who burn or bury the dead on communal sites, each owned jointly by a caste community, outside the residential area of the village.

[566] [22] The castes of agricultural serfs are absent in Kottayam, agricultural labor being done by Irava tenants or by the Nāyars themselves.

[23] This form of propitiation of alien ghosts in Kottayam is called a *teyyam tira*. It closely resembles the *kāranava tèrè* of the neighboring Coorgs (Srinivas, 1952, pp. 158-165.) In Coorg, however, lower caste officiants impersonate the Coorg *taravād's* own ancestors. In Malabar, lower caste propitiants impersonate only alien ghosts attached to the Nāyar *taravād*.

[113] [24] Witchcraft (*odi*), a witch (*odiyan*). For a more detailed account of witchcraft, see Thurston, VI (1909), 36-41, 122-127.

[25] M. Gluckman, *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa* (Manchester, 1954).

[26] Gluckman, *The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies. Social Structure*, M. Fortes, ed. (Oxford, 1949), pp. 145-167.

[114] [27] All of these statements apply to conditions in 1947-9. I observed no major changes in ritual activities during a brief revisit in 1952. The Malabar Coast, as the newly formed State of Kerala, [642] elected a Communist government in April 1957, and I have little information on conditions after that date.

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7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949) 1955 AWII Kerala AWII
Nayar

royal lineage. The retainer sub-castes disputed for rank and, in their separate villages, held the same rights of administration over the lower castes. In all these sub-castes, including the royal lineage, men were trained from the age of seven as soldiers in village gymnasia headed by military leaders (Asāns), and formed a permanent, mobile militia of the kingdom. Below the retainer sub-castes in rank came the small, non-military Nayar servant sub-castes of oil-mongers, funeral-priests, washermen, and barbers.[1] Quite apart from these Brahman and Nayar sub-castes, in a separate area of the village lived the lower patrilineal castes of tenants and menials and the lowest, 'exterior' castes of serfs.

The Nayar Kinship System. The Nayar lineage (*taravād*) is exogamous and matrilineal kinship terms are extended throughout its range. Its members are united by the observance of fifteen days' ritual pollution at a birth or death, and traditionally by worship of the spirits of dead heads of the lineage, and of a group of totemic snakes. The lineage is divided into small segments, which I call property-groups, each three to five generations deep. Each group is headed by its eldest man (*kāranavan*) who is the legal guardian of its members and controls their property.

The property-group was also until recently the dwelling-group. Residence was, and is still in some houses, uxorilocal: a husband visits his wife after supper and leaves before breakfast. Traditionally, a woman might have any number of lovers of appropriate sub-caste, and a man any number of mistresses. This custom of combined polyandrous and polygynous unions, besides being consistent with a strong matrilineal lineage system, was almost certainly associated with the occupation of Nayar men as soldiers, since it began to die out shortly after the armies were disbanded, about 1810, and a hundred years before the lineage showed signs of disintegration.

The rules of mating were as follows. Sex relations were prohibited within the lineage, and with more than one man or one woman of the same lineage. The Nayar servant sub-castes of oil-mongers, funeral-priests, washermen, and barbers were endogamous, as were all the lower patrilineal castes and the serf-castes. Within the range of military and ruling sub-castes (except for the royal lineages which admitted no peers), all unions were permissible outside the lineage and the range of prohibited affines, and within the sub-caste. Furthermore, these sub-castes were knit together by 'hypergamous' unions between women of lower and men of higher sub-caste. Members of the three retainer sub-castes, which disputed for rank, had only temporary and sporadic sex-relations across sub-caste boundaries. These took place during war when soldiers were permitted to contravene the normal rules against dining with or touching members of other retainer sub-castes and might enter each others' houses in order to eat and sleep. More permanent relationships were encouraged between women of the retainer sub-castes and Kiriyattil, Sāmantan, royal, or Nambūdiri men; between Kiriyattil women and Sāmantan, royal, or Nambūdiri men; between Sāmantan women and royal or Nambūdiri men; and between royal women and Nambūdiri men. The royal lineages, acknowledging no others as peers, were obliged to marry all their women upwards and all their men downwards. The Walluvanād and Cochin princesses married Nambūdiri men, the princes Sāmantan, Kiriyattil, or retainer-women. The Zamorins at first married only some of their women to Nambūdiris, and the rest to men of the more ancient royal lineages of Beypore, Bettem, and Kodungalur, all of whom had been conquered by the Zamorins and made honoured vassals in their kingdom. At some time in the 18th century, the Zamorin's lineage gave up this practice and began to marry its women only to Nambūdiris, while continuing to marry its men to Sāmantan, Kiriyattil, and retainer-Nayar women.

[1] Respectively called Vettukads, Attikurnis (Chidigans in Cochin), Velutheḍans, and Vilakkatalavans. The small temple-servant castes who rank between Nambūdiris and Nayars and were also concerned in hypergamous marriages are for lack of space excluded from this discussion.

7;Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

collapsed and the old system of differential land-rights between Nambûdiris and rulers on the one hand and their Nayar tenants on the other has been seriously undermined. Yet even today Nayars remark with pride that their lineage has 'fathers' in the lineages of their former landlords and chiefs, while chiefs and royalty alike revere their Nambûdiri *genitors*, and boast that the blood of these Gods of the earth is running in their veins.

Part II. The Nayar *Tali*-Rite in North Malabar

North Malabar lies north of the Kora River, being the old kingdoms of Kolattiri, Kurumbrattiri, and Kadattunad. Except for the coast-towns expanded by Europeans, it is sparsely populated and mountainous; part of it is forest. Villages lie separated by hill ranges, usually as clusters of houses on the hillsides surrounding small wet paddy-flats in the valleys. This contrasts with South Malabar and Cochin, where the coastal plain is wider, paddy-land extensive, and settlement usually continuous between villages.

Perhaps because of its difficult environment, North Malabar did not before 1792 approach the degree of political centralization achieved in the central area. The Kolattiri Rajas, it is true, temporarily conquered Kottayam, Kurumbranad, and Kadattunad, but the area was never consolidated as was the Zomorin's kingdom. Within the small kingdoms, *nāduvaris* fought each other and rebelled against their Rajas, allying themselves with different rulers as suited their needs of the moment. Neighbouring *desavaris* sometimes fought each other within the *nād*, while within the *desam*, *kudipaga* (lineage-feud) persisted till modern times.

Consistent with this lack of political centralization, high-class Nayars were not divided into sub-castes with administrative and occupational functions. Instead they had exogamous clans, dispersed between many villages. In Kottayam and Kolattunad the bulk of Nayars were Nambiars, independent land-owners owing only nominal allegiance to a chief. *Desavaris*, appointed by the Raja or the *nāduvari*, had administrative powers in their villages but belonged to the same sub-caste as other Nambiars. In most villages the land was divided between the Nayar property-groups as owners, Nayar tenancies being less common than in the south. *Nāduvari* lineages, however, usually owned the land in the whole village where they lived, employed Nambiar tenants as retainers, and claimed superior caste-rank, calling themselves Samantan Nambiars. Nambûdiri Brahmans are fewer in the north than in the south, especially since the Muslim invasions from Mysore in the 1760s, when many fled to Travancore. Those who remain live as landlords in widely separated villages, with local Nambiar lineages as retainers. The Nayar servant castes are spatially distributed as in the south. The lower polluting castes of manual workers are present in similar proportions, but Tiyyars and their washermen and barbers are matrilineal in North Malabar, patrilineal in the south.

The Nayar Kinship System. North Malabar Nayars, though trained in arms in the private gymnasia of their lineages, were not recruited as a permanent militia of the kingdom. Instead they cultivated their own lands with the aid of Tiyyar tenants, the serf castes being absent over most of the area. It seems largely because of this difference of occupation, North Malabar Nayars are virilocal: a wife moves on marriage to the ancestral house of her husband, and remains with him with rare exceptions till his death. Her children are brought up by their father and commonly return to their own lineage at puberty. A boy then begins to manage his *taravād* property under the direction of his *kāranavan*, while a girl is shortly afterwards married, from the lineage house, by common consent of her *kāranavan* and her father, often to the *kāranavan*'s son or to a maternal nephew of the father.

Divorce is permitted, but is rarer than in the south. Polygyny is rare, polyandry even traditionally forbidden. A cuckolded husband formerly cut off the hair of his wife and returned her to her lineage. The *genitor* has customary rights in and obligations to his children. In

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

with high and noble peaks. These shut the Nāyar country entirely out of the rest of India and have helped to a very great extent to preserve the peculiar customs of marriage and relationships of Malabar. The monsoon which these Ghats receive makes Malabar the most picturesque part of India, an ever green country with lofty trees, luxuriant vegetation, noble rivers and magnificent lakes. There is nowhere a place which so much approximates to the description of

> "Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
> Breaths of tropic shade and cluster knots of paradise;
> Droops the heavy blossomed bower, hangs the heavy fruited tree,
> Summer isles of Eden lying in the purple sphere of sea."

The extreme fertility of the valley and the rich tropical luxuriance of the forest have made life extremely easy, which even the importation of machines, mills, and factories has not been able entirely to change. Malabar is to a great extent, therefore, a land of idleness, and I may say of intellectual culture, for nowhere is learning, art, and poetry so much esteemed as among the Nampudiris and Nāyars of Malabar.

There are various reasons to believe that the Nāyars were very early comers in this place.[1] That they were not the aboriginal inhabitants of the place is evident from the fact that all over Malabar, from Mangalore to Cape Camorin, Nāyar families possess agricultural serfs who are distinctly of the negroid type. The Nāyars are a Dravidian race whose culture has only been superficially influenced by the Aryan immigration; of this more later.

The other communities of Malabar among whom the Nāyars live, are the Nampudiris, the Tiyas and the Pulayas. The Nampudiris are Brahmin landlords whose intercourse with and influence on the Nāyars we shall have to consider in detail later. A few families of Kshatriyas form the petty royalty of Malabar. The Tiyas are toddy drawers, people who are free men in theory but still show traces of serfdom in their relation with Nāyars, living as their tenants and doing their work for them. And the Pulayas, who till lately were slaves on whom was built up the agricultural life of the country. There are innumerable minor tribes, but they are small communities differentiated on the basis of their profession, like the Kanyans (astrologers), Asaris (carpenters), etc.

In this order Nāyars come next to the Brahmins and Kshatriyas and have precedence over all other castes. They are considered generally as a Dravidian variety of the Aryan Kshatriyas, which is, however, absolutely spurious in theory and is true only in so far as their *de facto* position is concerned. Any way, they form the feudal aristocracy of Malabar. Burke on a famous occasion classed them with

[1] See note at the end of the essay, on "The Origin of the Word Nāyars," Appendix. Note I.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

643
the eye, buffaloes with white tips to their tails, wild elephants 422
caught in traps and wild hogs that had fallen into wells. 825

Even in social matters, these chieftains had supreme 634
powers. In the settlement of marriages in any part of the
country, the Nayars had to obtain the chieftain's sanction 585
who held sway over the particular locality. The custom is even [182]
now in vogue though in a visibly weakened form. In the [431]
celebration of a *Kettu kalyánam* or *sambandham* in any part
of the country, the parties concerned visited the chieftain and
bought his consent with presents. For without such consent
no settlement and celebration thereafter could be arranged. His [574]
consent had to be procured even for the holding of festivals.

The chieftain's powers were so great that, if a wife living 595
with her husband proved an object of attraction to another, 634
adequate presents to the chieftain would buy him a formal writ,
giving him the rights of a husband over that woman. Thus
even so late as only a generation or two ago, the chieftain's
power was exercised in the encouragement of polyandry.

When a tali-tying ceremony had to be performed for a 588
girl of any decent family in a locality, she was taken to the 634
local chieftain with a nuzzar or *tirumulkázhcha* and other 421
things prepared for the festival that was to follow. In return
the girl was given a golden bracelet which she was authorised
to wear in his presence. No girl who had not received such a
one could wear it.

In certain parts of the State people were afraid to erect 634
buildings of more than one storey, lest they should incur the 342
inexorable wrath of the chieftain; nor were they allowed to tile
thatched houses. Departures from these customs were allowed
only with the consent of the chieftain, embodied in a writ
issued by him. In rural parts even to this day such restric- [369]
tions are not totally inoperative. In the State His High- [182]
ness the Raja gives his sanction in regard to some social 643
matters even to this day and Nambutiri landlords exercise a 566
similar authority among the tenants occupying their lands.
Certain kinds of conveyances such as palanquins and dholies 634
were reserved only for chieftains while the *Pallichans* were the [493]
only people who were employed to carry them. Various titles [1] [564]
[553]

1. Vide pages 18-20.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

163 There are 440 houses in the "town," and more than double that [361] number in the whole village. The statistics of births and deaths are kept separate for the part of the village outside the town and 165 the town; they stand thus for the last five years:—

Years.	Village.									Town.								
	Births.				Deaths.					Births.				Deaths.				
	Hindus.	Muhammadans.	Christians.	Total.	Hindus.	Muhammadans.	Christians.	Total.	Infants.	Hindus.	Muhammadans.	Christians.	Total.	Hindus.	Muhammadans.	Christians.	Total.	Infants.
1910-11	93	10	23	126	60	8	5	73	33	86	17	23	126	54	21	5	80	39
1911-12	75	6	29	110	71	6	24	101	38	86	34	23	143	83	17	19	119	57
1912-13	40	7	7	54	33	4	6	43	17	72	24	17	113	66	13	18	97	48
1913-14	50	5	6	61	43	2	5	50	17	66	22	23	111	64	8	24	96	37
1914-15	35	3	4	42	20	...	6	26	6	49	27	17	93	29	6	12	47	15

"Infants" include all under the age of three.

The figures for the "town" can be taken as fairly accurate while those of the village cannot be relied on; for the village officers rarely take the trouble of entering the latter correctly, while every dweller in "town" is made to tender accounts of births and deaths on penalty, and these are also within the close purview of the village officers. Note especially the rate of infant mortality in both the town and village. Nearly 50 per cent of the deaths [361] occur among the infants.* Muhammadans and Christians, who are invariably engaged in petty trade, are more numerous in the "town" than in the "village."

• 566 *Paracheri.*—The Pulayas (Cherumas and Paraiyas) in the State and of Malabar form a category by themselves. The State made an enquiry into their social and economic condition last year which I here utilize. There are nearly 300 Pulayas in the village. They are more or less serfs attached to the soil. They are agricultural workers only, and have no sort of proprietorship in the land. [465] They are paid daily wages in kind and that in very low measures. The following is the daily rate:—Men 2 edangalis † of paddy per day; women 1½ edangalis of paddy, boys 1 edangali. In addition, 5 edangalis of paddy are given to men and 4 edangalis to women on certain festive days in the year, and once a year every male and female member of the family is presented with a pair of 566 cloths ‡, 2 yards and 3½ yards respectively by the master. The 462 men plough, tend cattle, water the gardens, gather fuel, etc., while the women pluck the paddy seedlings to replant them, and do

* [The figures show an average infantile death-rate of 284 per 1,000 births for the area outside the "town," and of 336 for the "town"—Ed.]

[804] † 10 Cochin edangalis = 1 para = 8 Madras measures. [Therefore 1 edangali of paddy weighs 2 lb.—Ed.].

‡ These cloths are nearly one yard wide.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

566 [462] work connected with the harvesting, separating the paddy from the stalks, etc. They are employed as a rule throughout the year by their masters; in leisure days however they are paid a little less than the stated wage.

[262] They take kanji (rice boiled in water) and toddy in the morning, toddy in the afternoon, cooked rice at night; they eat also fish and flesh. They behave well, are obedient and honest and loyal to their masters, very earnest about their work, but are completely illiterate. There are no schools for them in the village.

[778] [796] They worship spirits in the shape of stocks and stones; and on the occasion of the festivals of their Gods and Goddesses they take a good dose of toddy and with drums and bugles and priests dance in the premises of the 'temple'.

564 There are sub-divisions among the Pulayas, Cherumas, Paraiyas, Nayadis, Malayas and others, who form separate castes among themselves and are restricted in their intercourse with one another.

[361] The Cherumas dwell in colonies of two or three families each, in low, small thatched huts near the land of their masters. It must be admitted that they are not treated properly by the high caste Hindus, though they form the backbone of agricultural labour in these parts. They are low paid and underfed and treated with contempt and sometimes with harshness by the other castes and their masters. It is a wonder that they still cherish obedience to their masters and earnestness in their work. There are a few who try to get rid of the yoke by running away, but the majority are contented and stay with their masters. They are experts in practical agricultural work and can face any sort of weather.

311 *Land and Occupation of land—*

	ACRES.
Area of wet lands	653·24
„ dry lands	937·21
„ lands watered by wells	...
„ common waste	18·81
Pasture other than common waste	33·94
Woods and forests	1,912·35
Fruit trees and scattered shade trees ...	301·48

312 There are altogether five public tanks in the village, most of which are not used for irrigation purposes at all, but for bathing, which is done by all at least once a day. There are no public wells. The cultivation of rice solely depends on the rains of the South-West Monsoon (June—September) which are copious, and of the North-East Monsoon in November. Every house however contains a well, from which water is drawn for drinking purposes and for watering the compound gardens in the summer. Water can be obtained at a very slight depth in most parts except at the foot of the hills. The sides of the tanks, usually not very large in size, are paved step by step with granite or laterite stones by which people can step down into the water for bathing. Water is lifted from the wells by means of pots for drinking purposes, but for watering gardens lifts of various sorts are used.

406 The water wheel, which costs about Rs. 35, is very rarely used except in *kol* fields where water has to be lifted out of the land.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

The statistics of births and deaths of this desam are obtainable only for the year 1915. They are given below :—

Births.

Males	50	Hindu	84
Females	43	Muhammadan	9
	93		93

Deaths.

According to age—

Lifeless deliveries	7
Below one year	9
Between 1 and 10	13
„ 10 and 20	1
„ 20 and 30	7
„ 30 and 40	3
„ 40 and 50	...
„ 50 and 60	3
„ 60 and 80	5
	48

According to sex and castes—

Males	24	Hindus	43
Females	24	Muhammadans	5

There is no paracheri in the strict sense of the term. The depressed classes, mostly Cherumas, are still in a state of semi-serfdom, depending for everything on their landlords and masters.

Land.—The area of the desam by settlement is 1,803·40 acres. This desam together with Mattupalli, Peringode, Pillakkattiri, Tolukad, Mathur, Alikara, Kuttanad, Perumannur and Chalisseri desams formed the old revenue amsam of Kothachira. Now Kothachira revenue amsam includes only Kothachira, Mathur and Peringode desams.

The areas under each description of land—

—	Wet.	Garden.	Occupied dry.	Unoccupied dry.	Unassessed.	Inam.	Poramboke.	Total.
	ACS. C.	ACS. C.	ACS. C.	ACS. C.	ACS. C.			ACS. C.
Private Jenmi.	445 27	209 43	197 16	935 71	..	...	...	1,787 57
Government Jenmi.	...	...	...	...	...	..	..	...
Unregistered lands.	...	...	..	...	15 83	...	...	15 83
	445 27	209 43	197 16	935 71	15 83	..	...	1,803 40

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

other lowest classes pay in paddy for their purchases of salt, chillis, onions, kerosene oil and so on. Nearly 1,000 paras of paddy per annum are received in this way. The Cherumas probably spend about as much also in the toddy shop, and at least Rs. 600 worth of paddy is sold in the village to Cherumas, Panans, etc. The sale of paddy is not confined to the shop. The most important sales take place at the houses of the persons who have surplus paddy to sell. It is mostly purchased by Muhammadan traders and others from outside the village.

Economic condition.—Money wages range from three to six annas per day according to the nature of the work and the efficiency of the labourer.

The labourer cannot earn these wages regularly throughout the year, as employment is irregular and cannot be obtained at all during certain seasons. Though rice in the staple food, the poor cannot afford a full meal of solid rice a day; instead, they take it in the form of a thin gruel, occasionally supplemented by a better meal as after harvest or during the *Onam* festival, which is the great national festival of Malabar. In harvest time labourers get extra wages for reaping and threshing—usually 10 per cent of what they reap and thresh. A competent man then earns from one to one-and-a-half paras * of paddy a day for a few days.

When wages are paid in kind it is usual to give from three to five edangalis. † Agricultural labourers are paid less. There is a sort of agricultural serfdom, the Cherumas being the victims. Of course it is not legally recognized and is breaking up. These Cherumas who do the greater part of agricultural work, are paid from one and half to two edangalis of grain, supplemented by certain allowances during sickness, festive occasions, women's lying-in, etc. A sort of feudal or patriarchal relationship prevails between these and their employers. They are attached to certain families and get work, or at any rate are paid, throughout the year. The standard of life among them is very low and most of them drink the toddy made in the village. They live in miserable hovels, and are physically and mentally very inefficient. But they are, to some extent, looked after by their masters, to whom in spite of ill-treatment, they are often very much attached. I have heard farmers saying that if these Cherumas left them they would be ruined, since the success of their cultivation, i.e., its profitableness under existing conditions, depends, they believe, on their cheap labour. In very recent times some of these Cherumas have begun to emigrate to other places attracted by the higher wages and better conditions of work. But this is uncommon owing to the covert opposition of their masters.

The Muhammadan coolies, who are superior both in skill and strength to the Hindus, earn higher wages, both because their labour is worth more, and because they are more independent. But their usual wages cannot be stated, as they contract for each job. Such work as splitting rocks, digging wells, splitting logs, and

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* [By Mr. Wood's tables (op. cit. p. 6), a para of paddy in this taluk weighs 22½ lb. Mr. Sundara Aiyar calculates it at 20 lb.—Ed.]

† [I.e., about 10 lb. weight of paddy, yielding about 7 lb. weight of raw rice.—Ed.]